

Special Study Committee on the Department of Juvenile Justice November 1, 2016

Presentation speaking points for: James Quinn

Deputy Director, Superintendent of Education

Success is our only option! Is the mantra of Birchwood School leadership; one aspect is the impact of the **PVC** – Positive Power, Vision, and Courage. PVC is a support group that engages the most difficult, at-risk, negative leaders in the school who have significant peer influence, and offers them guidance, instruction, and relational support to “reclaim” their lives and redirect them to a different and better path. Of those who have participated, 80% have “graduated,” with the other 20% having left SCDJJ before they could graduate. These most-challenging students are having successes that they never imagined possible. Instead of leading gang activities, they are leading Boeing on tours.

A Success Story: One PVC student who was progressing through PVC had the opportunity to leave SCDJJ and go to step-down program. Though the student was not successful in his step-down program and returned to SCDJJ, he reported directly to PVC only to find that his seat had been filled by another participant. Disappointed, the student walked away, only to return on multiple mornings to the PVC room. Perseverance paid off and room was made for him despite the designated capacity of PVC. This student has gone on to earn his GED and continues to be active in PVC.

100 Black Men offers mentoring, public speaking, and positive role-modeling that helps students become responsible young men. 12 students have lunch with mentors once per month at Birchwood School and 2 students once per month with mentors at Brookland Baptist Church.

Co-Ed classes are fostering school “normalcy”. Despite anticipated issues all is going well through this transition and student attitudes have been calm and positive.

Tutors Doubled – Academic Gains Soar The total number of tutors doubled to over 30 from last school year to this school year. Birchwood School has conducted more MAP testing already this year than all of last year. Of the 88 tested, 50 showed gains in reading and 29 in math. Of the 14 students who have taken the GED since July 2016, 9 have earned the GED within the first two months of this school year. There were 32 Honor Roll recipients the month of September and almost two-dozen Blue Ribbons at this year’s State Fair.

The Music Studio and Program was featured in a recent news story on WLTX which highlighted our Birchwood School programs as a tool to keep the juveniles focused and a path to rehabilitation.

2016 Will Eisner Innovation Grant- In collaboration with USC, DJJ was awarded the 2016 Will Eisner Innovation Grant to create an anti-gang graphic novel with SCDJJ’s Birchwood students. The grant provides approximately \$3,000 worth of graphic novels for the Birchwood Library and \$1,000 toward paying an illustrator to work with students and to illustrate the graphic novel. Birchwood students have created characters, developed a plot, and a storyboard for the novel. The students and USC will seek a publisher for the book.

